

## **BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – October 20, 2009**

- John Carman called the Committee to order at 7:30 p.m.
- John said he expected the November 17 meeting to focus on new information from the State Highway Administration on the BRAC intersections project, with information from Larry Cole of Park & Planning and Edgar Gonzalez of MC-DOT about the timing of public input as part of the mandatory referral process and phases of design and construction.
- John noted the addition of Ken Hartman at the BIC table. As BRAC impacts are being felt in the greater community, Ken's role in the BRAC process has become more prominent as the County Executive's area community liaison as Director of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center. John also noted he has requests from others to join the BIC which will be considered.
- Phil Alperson provided the following updates. Phil said that he has received requests to keep his verbal report short in order to allow more time for committee business. Phil said he would comply even though he believes his detailed summaries provide context to his updates. But he acknowledged that he emails detailed updates prior to the BIC meetings and posts detailed updates on the web site as part of the meeting summaries. What follows represents more detail than what Phil reported verbally.

### **○ UPDATED BRAC PROJECT INFORMATION ON THE WEB SITE:**

- The BRAC Transportation Matrix has been updated through October 19, 2009, mostly to reflect DAR certification for the Metro entrance pedestrian access project:  
[http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/transpo\\_project\\_matrix-101909.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/transpo_project_matrix-101909.pdf)
- There is also a "BRAC Investment Priorities" chart prepared by MDOT as of 9-25-09 that shows phased implementation of priority projects based on funding availability:  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/bracprojects-tiers-100609.pdf>

### **○ PEDESTRIAN ACCESS PROJECT UPDATES:**

- Summary of the Multi-Modal Pedestrian Access and Traffic Mitigation Project, as of 10-12-09:  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/pedestrianaccessupdate-101215.pdf>

**Defense Access Road (DAR) certification:** Oct. 5, Congressman Van Hollen announced that he had received formal notification from NNMC Base Commander, Admiral Nathan, that the Metro entrance pedestrian access project had been certified by DOD under the Defense Access Road Program. This is a very significant step towards construction of the project, and it is the first time DOD has ever certified a transit project under the DAR program which typically is used to widen highways in more rural areas. DAR certification means that DOD acknowledges that the BRAC action at NNMC will cause a significant increase in traffic on the main road serving the base – Rockville Pike – and that DOD will assume a role in mitigating that traffic. DAR certification does not provide actual funding for the project, but puts the ball in Congress' court to appropriate necessary funds. In the case of Bethesda BRAC, DOD has already penciled this project in the FY2011 budget, the only DAR project in the FY2011 budget – another indication of how important this project is to DOD.

THANKS go to lots of people: First and foremost, we recall that two years ago Ollie Oliveria told the Committee that the traffic issues relating to Bethesda BRAC had caught the attention of the highest officials at the Pentagon. The DAR certification arises from that, so many thanks go to NNMC officials who raised this and to the many people within the Navy and DOD who followed up. Ollie noted that Andrew Gutberlet, who attended Committee meetings in the past, had a major role in crafting the Navy's DAR request. Thanks also go to Congressman Van Hollen and our Senators and their staffs who have been working hard on this.

- DAR certification letter dated 9-29-09:  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/dar-certificationletter-092909.pdf>

**TIGER Grant applications:** USDOT will announce TIGER Grant recipients no later than mid-February, 2010 but hopes to make announcements in January. Over 1400 requests totaling \$57 billion were submitted for a \$1.5 billion pot of money. The Metro entrance pedestrian access project was submitted in two forms – as part of the MWCOG's regional transit-oriented request totaling \$267 million, and as a separate MC-DOT request for \$20 million, which is the minimum grant that can be awarded. It must be noted that NNMC has not endorsed any particular design, and that MC-DOT is working with NNMC to ensure that this project won't breach the security perimeter or historic viewshed.

In addition, MDOT submitted a \$60 million request for BRAC intersections projects at Bethesda, Fort Meade, and Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

- Information on TIGER Grants is on the BRAC site's Transportation Page:  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brectmpl.asp?url=/Content/EXEC/BRAC/transportation.asp>

The independent submission puts the project in a better position to be selected. Features of the pedestrian underpass concept and the application include:

1. Unlike any of the options studied by WMATA, this concept provides safe, convenient and direct passage from the Metro station to Navy Med for EVERY pedestrian and cyclist.
2. Incorporates concepts of community livability and walkability that have been discussed at BRAC Implementation Committee meetings for months.
3. Doesn't treat pedestrians like second-class citizens being shoved into an underground tunnel.
4. This won't require elevators or escalators, which will provide great long-term savings.
5. This design has a similar footprint to the WMATA "shallow tunnel" except that it is at-grade rather than underground.
6. Adaptable to accommodate emergency vehicle connectivity between Navy and NIH campuses; this is an especially appropriate use of federal funds.
7. If the WMATA "shallow tunnel" or "deep elevator" concepts are constructed, it would be virtually impossible to provide emergency vehicle connectivity in the future.
8. In terms of the competitive TIGER grant, this design makes the project truly Multi-Modal, which puts us at a better competitive advantage for funding – because it gets every pedestrian, it serves bus commuters, car/vanpool commuters, rail, cyclists, neighborhood pedestrians, etc. The WMATA Plans would not serve all those groups. The multi-modality is further enhanced by the ability to inter-campus vehicle movement.
9. The DAR certification and FY2011 DOD budget "placeholder" also gives the County's TIGER Grant application an advantage because the U.S. Dept. of Transportation will look favorably on TIGER Grant applications that can provide other sources of funding to complete their projects.

Clearing up some misconceptions that are circulating on the Internet:

1. There have been no secret meetings. For example, the Oct. 5 community leaders meeting with Rep. Van Hollen, Lt. Gov. Brown, and County Executive Leggett, which has been characterized on the internet as a "secret meeting," was discussed at the September BIC meeting. No one was excluded and two reporters were present.

2. There is no “secret plan” to build a network of roads nor is there a plan to divert funds from transit to a road project. At a July, 2009 meeting Clark Construction Company presented an unsolicited proposal to MC-DOT, NIH, the Navy and others that included ingress and egress ramps at Rockville Pike, but the proposal was vetoed at that meeting and was dropped. It has never been a part of the TIGER grant or any other funding proposal for the pedestrian access project.
3. There is no plan for a 4-lane highway. The multi-modal pedestrian underpass would have bicycle and pedestrian lanes, as well as lanes to allow emergency and other inter-operational vehicles to move between NNMC and NIH, such as medical vehicles, shuttle buses or others that NNMC and NIH might agree upon -- but not general traffic because it doesn't connect to Rockville Pike.

○ **BIKE/PEDESTRIAN PATHS UPDATE**

- MC-DOT has issued a multi-phase Task Order through the Office of Procurement with one of MC-DOT's Basic Ordering Agreement design consultants. The consultant is URS. The first phase for the project is the Jones Bridge Road Feasibility Concept. The notice to proceed for Jones Bridge Road was issued on September 25, 2009. The consultant coordinated with Navy personnel for access to the Navy Medical Center and has initiated the survey field work for Jones Bridge Road.

○ **RECENT MEETINGS WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS:**

- On Oct. 5, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown, and County Executive Ike Leggett met with community leaders to discuss the commitment of federal, state, and local governments to implementing BRAC traffic mitigation measures, even in these difficult economic times. They discussed coordinated efforts and plans to implement projects in phases based on available and potential funding.
  - 10-9-09 Commentary by Lieutenant Governor Brown:  
[http://www.gazette.net/stories/10092009/polico1153906\\_32528.shtml](http://www.gazette.net/stories/10092009/polico1153906_32528.shtml)
  - BRAC INVESTMENT PRIORITIES: Phased implementation based on funding streams, as of 9-25-09:  
[http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/brac\\_projects-tiers-100609.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/brac_projects-tiers-100609.pdf)
- On Oct. 13, MC-DOT and other County officials met with representatives from the Action Committee for Transit (ACT), the Sierra Club, and

community leaders to discuss ACT's concerns about the process that led to the pedestrian underpass concept in the County's TIGER Grant submission.

- Background:  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/pedestrianunderpass-timeline-101309.pdf>
- Summary of the Multi-Modal Pedestrian Access and Traffic Mitigation Project, as of 10-12-09:  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/pedestrianaccessupdate-101215.pdf>

- **DRAFT MDOT CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (CTP) FOR FY2010-2015 HAS BEEN RELEASED.** The CTP is updated annually. There are no new projects this year because of the economic downturn, but the intersections program remains funded.

- Read the DRAFT Report:  
[http://www.mdot.state.md.us/Planning/2009\\_ctp\\_tour/Draft%20CTP%2010-15](http://www.mdot.state.md.us/Planning/2009_ctp_tour/Draft%20CTP%2010-15).
- The annual MDOT "Road Show" will be in Rockville on November 12, 7:00 p.m., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor COB:  
[http://www.mdot.state.md.us/Planning/2009\\_ctp\\_tour/index](http://www.mdot.state.md.us/Planning/2009_ctp_tour/index)

- **GOVERNOR'S BRAC SUBCABINET TO MEET IN BETHESDA:** Tentatively, the BRAC Subcabinet, chaired by Lt. Gov. Brown, is planning to meet in Bethesda on Thursday morning, November 19, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the BCC Rescue Squad, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor reception hall, 5020 Battery Lane, Bethesda MD.

- Maryland BRAC web site:  
<http://www.brac.maryland.gov/index.asp>
- Information on the BRAC Subcabinet:  
<http://www.brac.maryland.gov/subcabinet.asp>

- **There were no updates from NNMC or the Neighborhood Coalition.**
- **PRESENTATION ON COMPREHENSIVE TRANSIT SERVICES:** Andy Scott led a "Transit Service Planning Update" presentation, featuring information on a variety of transit services, including MetroRail and Bus, the County's RideOn bus system, the Maryland Transit Administration's commuter bus service, MARC Rail, and commuter services and transportation demand management.

The regional transportation providers' shared goal is to increase transit ridership and greater use of alternative modes such as car/van pools, and to reduce single occupancy

vehicles. This will be difficult in trying economic times, but existing resources can be allocated according to demand, and various transportation authorities must coordinate to maximize their efficiencies.

Along with Andy, presenters included:

- Wendy Jia and Larry Glick from WMATA
- Gary Erenrich, Phil McLaughlin and Sande Brecher from MC-DOT
- Gerry Cichy, and Glenn Safran from Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)
- Jeff Miller from NNMC provided additional information on Transportation Demand Management

Most of the discussion was based on how existing resources might be reallocated based on increased demands for transit services in Bethesda due to BRAC. It was noted that MetroRail is not in a position to add additional cars to its fleet, but that the various bus systems could reallocate larger buses to Bethesda, if necessary, in a “rob Peter to pay Paul” strategy that would not expend additional revenue. Innovations were also discussed, such as using the ICC to accommodate express bus service from the east. Details on the various rail and bus services are in the MDOT PowerPoint presentation which will be attached to this summary on the web site when it is received.

Another transportation option may include use of the Bethesda Circulator, a trolley serving the Bethesda commercial district that is run by the County and is funded by revenues from Bethesda parking lots. It may be possible to extend its service to NNMC and NIH.

Sande Brecher noted that the County has a robust commuter services operation that provides information on commuter connections and coordinates the County’s transit subsidy program for small businesses. These services can be found at: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/commuter](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/commuter).

- Ken Strickland raised a matter pertaining to the intersections project, specifically at Connecticut Avenue / Jones Bridge Road. He noted that a summary of intersection project priorities based on available funding, that was shared at the Oct. 5 meeting with community leaders, showed his intersection as a top priority. His concern was whether the design and construction are “a done deal” now that funding appears to be available. He believes current designs for additional lanes and increased turning capacity at the northwest corner of that intersection, as they have been explained, would severely restrict access to and from his neighborhood.

Andy Scott said that nothing is final at this point, which is why there was no SHA report at this BIC meeting. John Carman pointed out that a public process is required and that the Park & Planning Board will have hearings as part of a mandatory referral.

Ilaya Hopkins noted that SHA will host a meeting with the Neighborhood Coalition in their Greenbelt offices on October 28 to provide updates on the intersections project. This may be an opportunity to reviews specific plans prior to the November 17 BIC meeting.

- John Carman solicited comments/questions from the public. Richard Hoyer raised points about bicycle ridership and other commuter services. 1 ) He noted that the \$267 million COG Regional TIGER Grant request that included the Bethesda pedestrian access project also included plans to study bicycle access to the Shady Grove Metro station and that such a study ought to be conducted for the Bethesda or Medical Center Metro stations. 2) He conjectured whether an existing private bus system serving private schools could be adapted for commuter service. 3) He noted that certain bus routes that terminate in the District or at Friendship Heights might be extended to the Bethesda and Medical Center Metro stations. 4) He inquired about the possibility of establishing a BikeShare service at Medical Center. 5) He inquired whether NIH and NNMC have explored the idea of marketing commuter services to renters or homesharers.

John Wetmore wondered if there is a “Live Near Your Work” program to encourage greater transit ridership or pedestrian/bicycle commuting, or if there are services in our area like elsewhere that provide customized information on transportation alternatives. Sande Brecher of MC-DOT noted that Montgomery County does offer such a service. She said this service could be marketed more widely if the County had greater resources.

- **The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17, 2009, 7:30 p.m., at the BCC Regional Services Center.**

**Committee members in attendance, October 20, 2009:**

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator

John Carman, Committee Chairman

Larry Cole, Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission

Gary Erenrich for Edgar Gonzalez, Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Leslie Weber for Brian Gragnolati, Suburban Hospital

Ken Hartman, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center

Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Assn.

Ed Krauze, Bethesda-Parkview Citizens Association

Janet Maalouf, Maplewood Citizens Association

Seth Maiman, Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board

Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village Home Owners Association

Patrick O'Neill, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce

Andy Scott, MDOT

Paul Thaler, Locust Hill Citizens Association

Melanie Wenger, Montgomery County Government, Office of Intergovernmental Relations

Ron Wilson for Dan Wheeland, NIH

**Ex-officio:**

Delegate Bill Bronrott  
Delegate Susan Lee  
Ken Reichard (Sen. Ben Cardin)  
Joan Kleinman (Rep. Chris Van Hollen)  
Jeff Miller, NNMC Transportation Program Manager  
David “Ollie” Oliveria, NNMC BRAC Program Manager  
Captain Daniel Zinder, NNMC Deputy Base Commander

**Other Attendees**

Nancy Abeles, Bethesda Crest Home Owners Association  
Sande Brecher, MC-DOT  
Dawn Chaikin  
Gerald Cichy, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)  
Pat Coccaro, Chevy Chase Park  
Larry Glick, WMATA  
Kathy Hochman, Chevy Chase Park  
Richard Hoyer  
Wendy Jia, WMATA  
Marilyn Mazuzan, Town of Oakmont  
Phil McLaughlin, Montgomery County RideOn  
Avice Meehan, Howard Hughes Medical Institute  
Jeanette Musil, Office of Economic Adjustment  
Bradford Pearson, Gazette Newspapers  
Glenn Safran, Maryland Transit Administration  
Ken Strickland, Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association  
Ann Thompson, Chevy Chase Park  
John Z. Wetmore, Perils for Pedestrian television series  
Julie Woepke, Maryland DBED, Office of Military and Federal Affairs